

THE ATONEMENT:

A CHARGE

TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

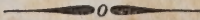
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN PENNSYLVANIA.

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don, the divine favour, all blessings whether providential or gracious here, and glory hereafter. These two points, the sacrifice and the obedience of Christ, are obviously distinguishable, and should be kept distinct in such portions of our study of the subject as may require it. And the particular branch to which chiefly I now ask the attention of my Rev. Brethren, (referring also to the appended matter to be published,) is, the ATONING SACRIFICE made by the Lamb of God. Addressing the Clergy, it is not my province to treat the subject practically, in its direct bearings on personal faith and conduct. My object is, to invite them to some reflections on a mode of explaining the doctrine, which to me appears erroneous, yet which is sometimes broadly maintained, but oftener vaguely held and perhaps incautiously defended, by those, with whose general creed it seems utterly at variance. In doing this, I trust I shall not be suspected of setting my wisdom above that of others: in so profound a study, we all are but learners; and though it belongs to my office to address my Clergy on such matters as I deem worthy of their notice, I do it with entire deference to their individual judgments. Above all, I hope I shall not be suspected of the folly of attempting to pry into the secret things which belong unto God: nothing of the kind is intended; but as an erroneous theory is current, it is proper to show its defects, and even to propound a better explanation, to relieve that class of minds which desire to apprehend somewhat at least of the reasonableness of their faith.

I am aware that it is not unusual to retreat from all argument on this subject, and plead that we are too ignorant and too feeble to investigate it; that to assert the doctrine in the mere language of scripture, is the limit beyond which we ought not to venture: and no one respects more than I do the lowly piety which carries out this principle, and really superadds no theory whatever. But I fear there are not many who thus restrict their minds; very few, I apprehend, guard themselves entirely from the unsuspected entertainment of theological expositions of the atonement: and those who do not will imbibe the opinions most current; which unfortunately are intermixed with error. There are then but a small-number who exclude *all* speculation on the subject. The majority *will* exercise their understandings, whether accurately or not, and whether by their own enquiries or those of others. And so long as this is natural to men, so long will it be useful to provide argument on the side of truth, to meet the argument on the side of error. The doctrines of the gospel, though sometimes above reason, are always so consonant with it, that human wisdom, when denying or perverting evangelical truth, may be met and repelled by efforts of the same wisdom in behalf of sounder views. As such a corrective, I desire that this composition may be regarded.

The propriety of arguing the theory of the Atonement will be perceived, when the unsound opinions very plausibly connected with the doctrine are brought into view. We are told that the blood of Christ bought off from the curse those only who will attain final bliss, and that those who are not saved could not have been included in the ransom; and it often is further alleged, that the stipulated price being paid, all for whom it was paid must unconditionally and infallibly be saved. Another very different doctrine rests on the same theory; that Christ purchased heaven for all men, and therefore that all will certainly obtain everlasting happiness. The theory common to these two conflicting doctrines, presumes that a certain amount of debt is due from the sinner, and is demanded by the JUSTICE of God, and that when Christ pays that debt, the sinners for whom it is paid are no longer the debtors of Heaven; these exonerated sinners being regarded in the one case as the elect only, in the other as all mankind. This theory is readily comprehended, for it presumes the work of Christ to resemble a common business of life; and because of its easy comprehension, it pervades, not only those classes of the Christian community who maintain one or other of the doctrines adverted to, but other classes likewise who admit neither of them. Its clearness however is no sufficient recommendation, if it be contrary to truth. And that it is untrue, may be seen at a glance; for it allows no proper forgiveness; the whole debt is paid by the Saviour, every thing is discharged, nothing is remitted. Let me introduce therefore the better theory, which addresses the atoning sacrifice to the HOLINESS of God, meaning thereby his absolute purity, his entire separation from sin, and abhorrence of sin. This view is not immediately so clear as the former one, because it does not present so perfect an analogy with any transaction in this lower world. Sin does not resemble a pecuniary debt, which may be discharged by a substitute: when it takes that name, its punishment, like that of a criminal offence, is a debt which the individual himself must pay; or else, he must be forgiven, and the debt never be paid. Forgiveness therefore, not payment, is to be procured by the atonement. And as the *holiness* of God is the final obstacle to the remission of sin, to that attribute, it is but natural to presume the blood of Christ to be rendered. The pardon of sin being made consistent with the holiness of God, all men may be forgiven; but he is not obliged to forgive, as he would be were his justice fully satisfied; conditions may be imposed. Justice being satisfied, there is no option, in the nature of things, concerning the release of the debtor; but holiness being vindicated, an option in the matter is left, to be exercised as the wisdom and benevolence of God shall dictate. And thus we are enabled to say, without any latent contradiction whatever between the two propositions,—that Christ tasted death

for every individual man,—while yet many for whom Christ died will be destroyed, punished everlastingly.

A full examination of the respective claims of these two theories would exceed the limits of a Charge. I trust however, that enough argument can now be adduced, to show which of them is to be preferred.

For the one theory it is alleged, that the death of Jesus is called in scripture a “price;” but I answer, not in the sense of paying the debt of another, but always as meaning a “ransom;” just as the word “redemption” signifies buying out of captivity: Christ has bought for all men a release from the bondage of sin, leaving to them either to improve their liberty or remain in their fetters. For the other theory, besides the general argument for the interpretation of such scriptures, we may offer the passage which declares that “God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, [or, for a sacrifice for sin,] *condemned sin in the flesh*” of that Son. The phrase “condemned sin” is very remarkable and apposite. To condemn a sinner, belongs to either holiness or justice, though to the former chiefly as the fundamental attribute; but to “condemn sin,” belongs only to holiness, not to justice. Christ, in his “flesh” or human nature, represented “sin;” in the sacrifice therefore of his flesh or human nature, sin was condemned; and this was done for the purpose of showing or evincing that God lowers not his abhorrence of sin, but most fearfully repels it, though he pardons the penitent sinner.

Another passage will be claimed for the former theory, which however will be found to belong to the latter—“that God might be *just*, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” The popular sense, at the present day, of the word “just” is ‘giving to every one his due;’ but this is only a portion of its meaning, for it is also defined in the Greek and Latin, ‘upright, righteous, or correct, and even pious,’ and in English, ‘virtuous, innocent, pure,’ and these significations are equivalent to ‘holy.’ In scripture especially, we often find the word in this sense: “the resurrection of the just” or good; “a just man falleth seven times and riseth again;” “sendeth rain on the just and the unjust” or the godly and the wicked; “the path of the just is as the shining light;” Noah and others are called “just” men; “the wicked plotteth against the just” or good; “just persons who need no repentance;” “the just man walketh in his integrity:” all these passages, and there are many more, refer to the practical *holiness* which pertains to justified persons. Another text refers to perfect holiness, as not existing in men, “there is not a just man on earth”—just, in what sense?—“who doeth good and sinneth not.” And it is in this sense, that our Saviour is denominated “the just” or holy person “suffering for the unjust” or unholy: he is “Jesus Christ the Righteous,” or the “Just One:” he is likewise called “the Holy One

and the Just" or innocent, as contrasted with the murderer whom the people "desired" Pilate to release. So it is declared of the Deity, "the just Lord will not do iniquity, but the unjust [the bad man, in whatever department] knoweth no shame."* We have then the proper key to the passage before us; it means, "that God might remain perfectly good, innocent, correct, holy, in pardoning the sinner who believes in Jesus." Not that the word "just" in the passage need be changed, for it is a proper translation; but that our conception of its meaning ought not to be formed on its present popular use: the word 'righteous' would perhaps be less liable to be misunderstood.† There are theologians who regard the atonement as addressed to the justice of God, who show in their expositions, that they mean, or at least include, and principally, that sense of justice which agrees with rectitude, purity, or holiness.‡ But in order to secure this meaning, it is proper to contrast that theory with the one which gives to the word justice its narrow sense, whether distributive or commutative, or which makes that sense predominant: and this can best be done, by leaving it in this popular acceptation during our discussion, and placing beside the theory thence resulting the other, which addresses the atonement to the holiness of God. To this comparison, therefore, of the two expositions, I now ask the attention of my Rev. Brethren.

It is argued, I have remarked, that we owe a debt to the Almighty; that his justice forbids our exoneration; and therefore Christ pays what we owe, and thus satisfies justice. And it is added, that those who are exonerated may, through the acceptance of this payment, claim their pardon and heavenly crown as a right, and hold the Deity to his negotiation. This would be true, if the analogy of a debt and a discharge were applicable; for nothing is clearer than that, in the case of a pecuniary obligation, if the required sum be paid, come it from whom it may, the creditor is satisfied and can ask nothing more. But in the case of moral debts, no commutation can be made; enlightened law and

* See Appendix B.

† In Poole's Synopsis, the commentary on this word is—"Justus, i. e. sanctus et rectus, justus in se, justus vindex gloriæ suæ," &c: 'just, that is, holy and righteous; just [holy and righteous] in himself; the just [holy and righteous] vindicator of his own glory.' It is proper to add, however, that the word "just" in this passage may have the sense of 'justified,' as it frequently has elsewhere; and the sense would then be, 'that God might be justified,' both to himself and his intelligent creatures, and yet 'the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.' This brings the same result. The point requiring 'justification' or vindication is God's rectitude, purity, holiness, in pardoning the sinner; that being, if we may so speak, the central attribute of Deity, and the standard by which the other moral attributes are regulated.—See the extracts from Saurin and Tillotson in Appendix B.

‡ See Appendix C.

equity demand that the offending party, and he only, suffer the penalty, if it be a personal infliction; and even pecuniary forfeitures are presumed to come from him, and so are proportioned to his means, estate, expectations, or credit. When an innocent person is required to suffer in place of the guilty, we do not argue that justice demands the commutation; for, whatever may be said of rude administrations, enlightened justice will not allow it. A punishment inflicted on the innocent is rather to be traced to the mere sovereignty of the power that orders it. And the motive of this sovereign demand may be, either wanton domination, or else some beneficial object sanctioned by correct policy. A tyrant, for example, may indulge his despotism by inflictions on the guiltless friends of a fugitive or concealed malefactor. A less objectionable authority, as another instance, in order to maintain public faith, and vindicate national rights, may, when such faith and rights are violated, sacrifice the hostage left by a foe as security, though he is personally innocent of the violation. In such cases, we ascribe the condemnation, not to justice, in the sense of giving to every one his due, which has no demand except on the guilty themselves, but to mere sovereignty, acting either for arbitrary or for beneficial purposes.

So far then as analogy may determine, it cannot be held that the sufferings of an innocent Saviour in place of guilty men, were accepted as the payment of their debt. They were exacted by the sovereign power of the Majesty on high. And the motive which my argument suggests for requiring this atonement, was, that the divine holiness should be vindicated when the divine mercy grants pardon to the sinner; it was, that mercy and truth might meet together, that righteousness and peace might embrace each other. There is mercy in God, but there are truth also and righteousness, which are another name for holiness. And while mercy pleads that the penitent sinner be not given to perdition, truth expostulates that the Holy One ought to maintain his moral perfection, for his own sake; and also, for the sake of others, not relax his discountenance of sin. To pardon any being in whom the least sin remains, on the ground of his being good enough, would be to yield so far God's moral perfection, and relax his discountenance of evil. Hence the penitent is forgiven, not in any degree on account of his imperfect goodness, but because the sufferings of Christ the Victim attest that God's moral perfection yields not, and that his discountenance of sin is not relaxed: so that those sufferings become the sole procuring cause of the penitent's pardon. Thus it is that mercy can act without contradicting truth, without infringing on holiness. And though we do not fully understand why God inflicts his abhorrence of evil on the person of a different being from those who have sinned, the doctrine,

besides resembling in part certain providences of the innocent suffering for others, is not contrary to reason, as that doctrine is which compares sin to a pecuniary debt, and would thus make the Redeemer to have paid our moral debt. Expiation and payment are radically different: if they were not, one might pay beforehand for the privilege of offending. In the sacrifice of Christ, the divine purity or rectitude shows its infinite indignation against evil. On him who, having no sin of his own, agreed to represent our sins for this purpose, and who consented that for this great object the Lord should lay on him the iniquity of us all,—on Him is exercised the pure and awful indignation of a holiness perfect and repulsive of every stain. Strictly speaking, Christ does not undergo a penalty or punishment, for that is remitted; he suffers to attest that God is truly angry with sin, the anger being that of principle, not of passion: and this holy anger, we may remark, has no relation to placability; for placability in a matter of principle, if the word has meaning with such a reference, is so much surrender of principle. This holy anger having had its course, the cross may be appealed to, as the proof that God has surrendered nothing of his moral perfection, in granting pardon to the sinner, when he repents, though in a degree he is a sinner still.

It may be objected, that this theory leaves the divine justice unsatisfied. It certainly does, in the sense usually intended; and for the obvious reason, that that attribute, in the limited popular signification of an unyielding claim of the rights of God over the sinner, appears entirely incompatible with our salvation. Strict justice requires that the offender, the offender himself, be consigned to eternal woe. And yet mercy pleads for that very offender. One of two results then must follow; either justice must yield to the remission of the punishment; or mercy must be violated by that punishment's being exacted. An apostle has named a principle which decides this issue, "mercy rejoiceth against judgment;" which mercy would not do, if judgment were inflicted, even on a substitute. And the very term "forgiveness" or "remission" implies that God relinquishes his right, that justice foregoes its claim, and bends to the milder attribute, as soon as God's holiness is, by the cross, guarded from all dishonour. Still, no injustice is done. None to God, for it is the prerogative of sovereignty to remit the demands of justice. No injustice to Christ, for his offering was voluntary; and his human nature is rewarded for enduring the cross, by its obtaining the joy once set before him, by its exaltation to the right hand of the Father. Nor does this pardon of the penitent have an unjust or injurious effect on moral creatures, whether angels or men, by encouraging them to do evil in the expectation that grace will abound; for, while the atonement, Christ in agony and on the cross, speaks peace to the godly, it

declares indignation and wrath for the wicked; for if God, through his deep abhorrence of sin, bade his sword awake against the man who was his own fellow, how much more terrific will be its execution on the frail but obstinate creatures who despise both the divine threatenings and the divine mercy! The triumph therefore of compassion over justice, through Christ crucified, involves no injustice.

The substitution of one person for another, for the infliction of a legal penalty, is not, we have seen, the dictate of enlightened justice. But we are clear of this difficulty in regard to the Saviour's vicarious function, when we address the atonement to God's holiness. Christ does not bear our sentence, as due to justice by the divine law, for that is remitted; but other griefs, a burden peculiarly his own. We often see one man suffering for another, suffering for the good of many, the innocent even for the guilty, in the course of providence; but this is not penal substitution, which is the only kind at which our natural judgment revolts.* Other substitutions than penal we daily observe, as results of God's sovereign administration, though not on so grand a scale, or concerning matters so hidden from our search, as that of the Redeemer expiating the sins of a world. The scriptures which declare the substitution of Christ for us, do not require the penal construction of his sufferings. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him;" not our chastisement, but that which brought us peace. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" our iniquity he bore as representing sin, and he bore also a suffering for sin as such a representative, but not the penalty of our iniquities. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and by his stripes we are healed;" but the wounding, the bruising, the stripes, were not penal, but a substitution of the other sort. "The just suffered for the unjust," not penally, but as we often see in the course of God's sovereign providence. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" he was "made a curse" of the sacrificial kind, but this is wholly different from bearing the very "curse of the law."† That the sufferings of

* Bishop Butler terms ordinary providential substitutions "punishments." This, I apprehend, is an extended use of the word; which in some writers might be deemed a *petitio principii*, but not in Bishop B., as he endeavours to avoid all theories of the atonement. (Analogy, Part 2, Chap. 5.) All sufferings of men are either,—punishments of their own respective sins generally, but not of the sins of others in which they have not participated,—or else, chastisements "for their profit,"—or the two combined: both occur frequently. What are called national punishments are an example; the wicked of the nation suffer for their sins; those who are innocent of the public defection, though included in the suffering, undergo it, not as a penalty, but a chastisement for their good. Punishment falls on the nation as such, and on those who make it bad; on the others, the rod of love.

† See Macknight on Gal. iii. 13.

Christ, though vicarious, were not penal, is further evident from their result; they brought him a reward, an infinitely higher reward than belongs to the best of the creatures, to even the most exalted of the angels; whereas penal sufferings, when complete, do but discharge the offender. The suffering and death of Christ were a voluntary obedience of the will of God; penal suffering and death however, are not obedience, but a forced submission, and are not voluntary, but unwillingly received: or, in the few cases in which they are welcomed by the victim, he regards them as martyrdom, not as a penalty,—as one of those acts of providence, in which an innocent person is allowed to suffer, for the furtherance ultimately of the benevolent plans of the Deity towards others. Such appears to be the nearest analogy to the vicarious pains of the Redeemer.

On the principle that the same offence ought not to be twice punished, or the same debt twice paid, justice having no demand after being once satisfied, those for whom Christ bore the legal sentence cannot themselves be punished. If so, and if Christ “died for all,” and bore the sentence for “the whole world,” then all must escape punishment hereafter, and be saved. Or else, the elect only being saved, Christ was sentenced and made payment for none but them; and then, of course, he did not “taste death for every man:” and there is but a step between this consequence and a decree of reprobation on all other human beings. Thus the doctrine that the atonement was addressed to the justice of God, in the popular sense, leads, unavoidably I think, either to universalism, or to absolute predestination, and so impugns those scriptures which declare an everlasting punishment for the wicked, or those which affirm that Christ was “the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.”—But no such consequences result from the theory that the atonement was addressed to the holiness of God. It is not a penalty endured for all, or a sum paid for all, which cannot be again claimed from any; or for a few only, making their safety unconditional, and leaving all others without its benefit. But it is a transaction which, rendering the pardon of sinful men consistent with God’s moral perfection, has procured a pardon for all sinners, which will be granted to all who accept it; while those who will not accept it, are not released, as if their debt was paid, or their penalty fulfilled, but are still subject to the indignation of that divine holiness which they obstinately continue to dishonour. The ransom is paid for all; but those who prefer the bondage of sin remain captives. Thus we have a theory of the Atonement which has no affinity whatever with either of the erroneous doctrines to which I have referred.

By addressing the atonement to the justice of God, in the popular sense, we take away the divine mercy from the Father, and appropri-

ate it all to the Son. Man is fallen, and under condemnation; and Christ has mercy on him, and offers an atonement; which atonement is accepted by the justice of the Father, as the whole amount of the debt, and so sufficient for man's discharge. Such an atonement is all that justice can require; and thus, as a defender of this theory most incautiously remarks,—and sorry I am to say that it is the celebrated Mr. Faber,—thus, the “very attribute of justice, *justice not mercy*, was now as much concerned in pardoning the sins of every faithful penitent, as it was before concerned in punishing them.”* If such a principle be sound, where is the tender feeling of the “Father of mercies?” and how is he “the Lord God, gracious and merciful?” He has accepted a full equivalent for the penalty of our sins, on the very principle of an equivalent: and be it reverently asked, in illustration, should we call

* Faber's Sermons, vol. 1. p. 37. Philadelphia, 1817. These remarks of Mr. Faber's led the author of the Charge, many years ago, to study somewhat minutely the doctrine of the atonement, and bring into more complete order the sentiments before obscurely held as results of his theological reading. Mature reflection has confirmed him in these opinions, as now offered to his Clergy.—The quotation from Mr. Faber occurs in this passage: “The complete penalty of sin was exacted even to the uttermost far-thing: and the most ample satisfaction was made to the divine justice; but it was done, not by the sufferings of the guilty, but by the sufferings of one placed in their stead. The divine attribute of justice being now perfectly satisfied, and a punishment completely equivalent to the sins of the whole world having been inflicted; that very attribute of justice, *justice not mercy*, was now as much concerned in pardoning the sins of every faithful penitent, as it was before concerned in punishing them, notwithstanding his repentance. For, precisely as it would be unjust to punish a man twice for the same offence, so it would be unjust to punish those, whose punishment had already been undergone by their surety, Christ.” Here is the whole theory I have censured. It consists of erroneous premises, carried to their just conclusions.

Matthew Henry was more consistent, yet in error, when he wrote,—“It is now become not only an act of grace and mercy, but an act of righteousness in God, to pardon the sins of penitent believers, having accepted the satisfaction that Christ, by dying, made to his justice for them. It would not stand with his justice to demand the debt of the principal, when the surety hath paid it, and he hath accepted that payment in full satisfaction.” (On Rom. iii. 26.) The “satisfaction to justice” being “full,” it is not easy to comprehend that “grace and mercy” were exercised in receiving it from a substitute instead of the sinner.

Dr. Wardlaw denies that the sufferings of Christ were “an exact equivalent,”—addresses the atonement to the “*spirit* of the claims of God's justice,”—[which spirit however is the dictate of holiness,—] and says, “the blood of Christ may be infinite in its atoning *value*, and yet limited in its atoning *efficacy*; *sufficient* for the salvation of *all*, and yet *effectual* to the salvation of comparatively *few*,” and thus he reaches the sound conclusion, that “even when we come in the name of the Mediator, we are taught to approach as *suppliants*, rather than as *claimants*; not demanding a debt, but entreating for a favour.” (Discourses, p. 204—206.)

Mr. Faber and M. Henry, I apprehend, give the true result of addressing the atonement to God's justice, in the popular sense. Dr. Wardlaw regards it as “a *general* manifestation of the righteousness of God,” and hence, though employing the word “justice” as well as “holiness,” he escapes this unseemly result.

that man merciful, who received his full demand from a friend of the debtor, instead of the debtor himself? He might be just, and his act honest and fair; but mercy would have no operation in such a case. By the other theory however, that which directs the atonement to the holiness of God, the attribute of mercy, instead of being obscured, is made conspicuous, and even fundamental. The mercy of the Father prompted the whole labour of love. Mercy interceded for the sinner; holiness, being the essence of God's moral perfection, must not yield, but on the pleading of mercy allows a vindication by the atonement; justice, having in the sense here used a mere claim, foregoes that claim, for the same plea of mercy. And thus "mercy rejoiceth against judgment," and God's "tender mercies" take rank "over all his works."

The theory I have rejected throws no light on the benefit derived by departed infants from the death of Christ. Infants are not subjects of justice; not being responsible; not having attained that ripeness of the moral faculty which only can give moral character to obedience or disobedience. They are indeed, by the innate depravation of their nature, unfit for the undeviating rectitude originally required of man; they are incapable of moral perfection; their very innocence is not a moral quality, it is the mere absence of actual transgression. But, until they incur personal responsibility by intentional sin, the justice of God, whether commutative or distributive, has no demand on them. And if they die in this early condition, and are saved,—as they require no atonement to the divine justice, their salvation is not due to the cross, according to this theory of its benefit: justice has no claim against them, till they "know to refuse the evil, and choose the good." Adopt however the other theory, and there is no derogation from the honour of Christ. The divine holiness must view with repugnance a creature who is born radically incapable of pure and perfect obedience, and who will not live long enough to gain the victory over this depraved nature. That divine repugnance requires an atoning intervention: and therefore the moral unfitness of an infant is laid, with all other human defects and blemishes, upon the Victim of the cross; the acceptance of the infant is thus rendered compatible with God's holiness; it has this large share in the Redeemer's benefits. And, dying without actual sin, it is through Him, cleansed from its pollution of nature, and thus has access to the Father, and admission to heavenly bliss. Through the atonement, the divine purity is vindicated in receiving an infant to glory, though it bore a stain through its whole earthly existence.

By addressing the atonement to the holiness of God, instead of his justice in the popular sense, we give the doctrine a more fundamental character. Holiness is the fundamental divine attribute, the comprehensive attribute, sustaining, regulating, including all the moral attri-

butes: it is the counterpart, so to speak, of the eternal order, harmony, and fitness of things. The other moral attributes, truth, love, justice, mercy, have reference to the creatures; but holiness, the divine purity, is as perfect without creatures as with them. The theory therefore which I commend goes deeper than the other: holiness is a principle, and justice (in the restricted meaning) one of the rules of action founded on that principle; and if the principle be satisfied or vindicated, concerning any part of the divine counsel, no rule founded on that principle can be an obstacle; and thus when God's holiness is propitiated, justice retains no longer its demand. Justice has regard to the law; holiness, to the reason or basis of the law;* which is the eternal order, harmony, and fitness of things. Law, merely as such, is changeable; as in the transfer of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first. The general law of God has often been made to yield, that is, has been superceded for a time by special commands; those, for example, which ordered the extermination of various tribes, and the slaying of individuals. And the non-observance of a law has been tolerated, to such an extent even as to be a custom; as in the case of polygamy. But the *basis* of law, the order, harmony, fitness of things, never changes, and never is allowed to yield; it dictates the exception when a law is divinely countermanded, as well as the rule when the law retains its force: so that we may regard the fitness of things, which holiness corresponds to and maintains, as law in the abstract, and particular obligations or commandments as deductions from it, or revelations concerning it. Hence, were justice to accept a commutation for infraction of the law, holiness would still require vindication before the offender could be consistently pardoned: whereas, if holiness be vindicated, the difficulty arising from principle is removed, and the penalty of the law cancelled, and so nothing is left for justice to adminis-

* I use the word "law" in its current sense. It has however more ample significations, one at least of which is not far removed from 'holiness;' which variety of meaning appears to have produced vagueness in some expositions of the atonement. Hooker says, "The being of God is a kind of law to his working; for that perfection which God is, giveth perfection to that he doth." "The law whereby he worketh, is eternal, and therefore can have no show or colour of mutability." "Now that law, [for the creatures,] which, as it is laid up in the bosom of God, they call eternal, receiveth, according unto the different kind of things which are subject unto it, different and sundry kinds of names"—as the law of nature—a law celestial, for the angels—the law of reason—divine law, given by special revelation—human law, gathered from that of reason or of God. He thus makes "a twofold law eternal;" the first that by which God himself worketh; the second, that "laid up in the bosom of God," and emanating from thence to the creatures. What is "laid up in God's bosom," law at its fountain-head, is of course the prompting of perfect rectitude or holiness; and what emanates from thence, law in the ordinary sense, flows from that prompting. (Eccl. Pol. B. 1. sect. 2, 3.)

ter. As also law, simply considered, is changeable, but its basis, the eternal fitness of things, unchangeable, it is clear that law is stern, not of itself, but only as resting on this fundamental principle. The sternness or inflexibility ascribed to law is properly the sternness or inflexibility of this principle,—or rather, of the divine holiness, which is the living quality of which that principle is the type or pattern. And as this inflexibility or sternness is the obstacle to the sinner's pardon, it is plain that the atonement, which is to remove that obstacle, must be addressed to the holiness of God.

The effect of the two theories, respectively, on the doctrine of the exclusive merits of Christ, as connected with that of conditions of salvation, deserves particular notice. I have remarked, that if the divine Justice accepts the atonement as the full discharge of our debt or our penalty, there is no room for conditions. To make room for them, the discharge must be less than full; our repentance and faith, such as they are, being the balance. And this assumption clearly gives them the nature of a valuable consideration; in other words, of merit. But Holiness, though it demands repentance and faith, is not by them vindicated in the pardon of sin; because they are defective in themselves, they are not the complete graces becoming fallen men, but perpetually require improvement; and because they reach not the standard of perfect obedience, the unimpeachable moral rectitude proper in intelligent creatures. And hence, while the divine holiness is perfectly vindicated by the atonement, so that all human sin is pardonable, it yet makes the change to a new heart the consideration on which sin will be actually pardoned, the consideration by which distinction is made between the godly and the ungodly in their final portions,—but not the valuable consideration.* This sort of consideration, a renewed mind, is indeed demanded by God's holiness, as is the avoidance of any given transgression in those who commit other transgressions: but, as we would not allege that the thief is meritorious, or satisfies the divine holiness, in so far as he does not murder, since his character is unworthy independently of the latter crime, so we may not regard the new heart and life as meritorious, or satisfying the divine holiness, in so far as it is an improvement on the former condition, since the character is still deficient. From the nature of the demands of Justice, he who performs one demand, though not another, is so far justified as he is obedient; but holiness makes an undivided demand, which cannot be discharged in part; it must be en-

* The distinction between a consideration and a valuable consideration, may be found in the cures effected in looking on the brazen serpent. The "looking" was a consideration, and an indispensable one, but not a valuable one. That was only in Christ, procuring of God this, as he does every, mercy.—For a fuller view of this matter, see Appendix D.

tirely fulfilled, or holiness will not be satisfied in any degree. The claim of Justice, in the popular sense, is separable into as many parts as there are virtues or vices in the composition of character; but the claim of Holiness is one in its very nature, though it be divided for the mere elucidation of law and duty; single points of innocence do not make a holy character. He who commits no murder, and has no desire of the sort, so far fulfils the requisition of Justice, and may, in that light, stand on the merit of his innocence in this respect, whatever be the balance of his character. But under the eye of Holiness, there must be *no* balance against him: if there be, he has no merit, but only demerit and condemnation. Hence the inspired declaration, "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all;" not guilty of all kinds of sin, obviously; but guilty of unholiness, which violates the "whole law" whose concentrated precept is "be ye holy."* So clearly does the theory which builds the atonement on the divine holiness exclude all human merit, yet exact all possible human obedience. Repentance and faith then, the new heart and life, not being positive holiness, or innocence, are not in themselves acceptable to God; yet being comparative holiness, they may, through Christ, be accepted, while the character which is without this comparative quality, impenitent character, will be rejected. And thus the theory I recommend allows fully that salvation is conditional, without the slightest interference with the doctrine of the exclusive merits of the Redeemer.†

No further contrast of the two theories appears requisite, my Rev. Brethren; and I trust, no further commendation of the one I offer to your consideration. I do not pretend to have fathomed the depths of so profound a subject, in which the brightest intellects have acknowledged mystery after their best elucidations. But I hope I have shown that we may reject that explanation of it, which, rightly followed out, leads to the denial of future everlasting punishment, or to the doctrine that

* What is termed by some theologians the "remedial law," or the "new law," usually regarded as erroneous doctrine, because affording a pretext for human merit, belongs to the Justice theory. The atonement satisfies the justice of God for the penalty of so much of the perfect law as is beyond the ability, under grace, of fallen man. Thus the law is reduced, from requiring innocence, to requiring repentance and faith; and these man fulfils, and by fulfilling them escapes the remaining portion of the penalty. Christ has the merit of lowering the law; man, the merit of obeying it as lowered. By the Holiness theory however, the "remedial law" is superfluous; for were Christ to vindicate the divine holiness in reducing the perfect law, he would vindicate it in accepting repentance and faith, which are but moral imperfection at best: in other words, holiness requires the atonement for *both* branches of this process, for the *entire* mercy proposed; and thus the interposing of a "remedial law" is gratuitous.

† See Appendix E.

all but the elect are brought into life, and carried through life, without any provision for their escaping the eternal penalty, or any possibility of doing so: the latter, owing to the state of the christian world about us, is the error to which *we* are most exposed. To that error, the theory faulted has a direct tendency; and many of us would fall into it, were it not for the counteraction of our general code of doctrine, and our predominant standards of theological study; and also, were it not that the human mind often acts inconsistently, and maintains both a tenet and its opposite at the same time,—for, to say that the whole debt of all sinners has been paid, yet that some must hereafter pay their portion of that debt themselves, is to affirm a contradiction. This contradiction is unavoidable, in those, who, asserting a final perdition for the ungodly, believe also in an universal atonement, yet address it to the justice of God in the restricted sense. And though this inconsistency is better than maintaining a limited atonement, yet like all inconsistency it is undesirable, nay an evil. Nor, if we surrender the defective theory, is there any difficulty in escaping the dilemma; for, by addressing the atonement to the justice of God in its more important sense of rectitude or moral accuracy, or, in better theological phrase, to the holiness of God, all the incongruity vanishes. God's moral perfection never succumbs to sin; and when it is so vindicated that there will be no such yielding in pardoning the sinner, he may be pardoned, every sinner may be pardoned; while yet there is no obligation, as there would be were the entire debt paid, to pardon every degree of sinful character; so that a distinction may rightly be made between the penitent and believing sinner, and the impenitent and unbelieving. These are the great points to be secured; that Christ died for all men, so that all may be saved; and that those who are not saved owe their perdition to themselves, and not to any want of provision for their safety in the divine counsels or transactions. My revered predecessor has adduced very strong approbation of these points of doctrine from two of the martyrs of the Reformation:—from Bishop Hooper, “the promise of grace appertaineth to every son of man in the world, and comprehendeth them all; howbeit, within certain limits and bounds, the which if men neglect or pass over, they exclude themselves from the promise of Christ: as Cain was no more excluded, till he had excluded himself, than Abel; Saul than David; Judas than Peter; Esau than Jacob.”—from Bishop Latimer, “Christ shed as much blood for Judas, as he did for Peter;”^{*} an assertion utterly at variance with the theory I disavow, but perfectly agreeing with the one I would recommend. I think also that I have the concurrence, substantially, of my able predecessor, in addressing

* Bishop White's Comparison, V. 2. p. 86, 90.

the atonement to the divine holiness rather than to the divine justice.*

I repeat however, that had the word justice been allowed to retain its large meaning, and not been restricted to the popular confined sense, there would be no necessity for this distinction, and none of course for such a discussion as I have now brought before my Rev. Brethren. And as words are of comparatively small moment, when the truth they are to convey is duly understood and secured, I object not to the use of the word Justice, instead of Holiness, in stating what I regard as the sound doctrine of the Atonement; provided there be no narrowing of the full signification of that word, whether by definition, or by modes of illustration which imply its limited sense. For myself, I prefer the phraseology I have here employed. But others are as free to decline its use, as they are to withhold their approbation from the theory I have submitted, or to modify it, as their own deliberate judgments may deem proper.

Allow me to introduce a few remarks concerning the other branch of the work of Christ, mentioned in the beginning of the Charge,—his *obedience*, as man, to both the law, and that further will of God which ordered him suffering and death though he was innocent and without offence. Human salvation is of Christ alone, because he made the sacrifice for the pardon of our sin, and also because he procured for us, by the merit of his *obedience*, all other favours, life and grace here, immortality and glory hereafter. Though pardon is offered us in the cross, and though the conditions of pardon are fulfilled by us, we still are sinners; hence, though punishment be remitted, we deserve no reward or positive favour. But a part of the reward gained by the perfect obedience of Christ, is to have *us* favoured and rewarded. Such benefits God does not confer immediately on us who deserve them not, but mediately, granting them to Christ as *his* recompense, and to *us* only

* Bishop White, denying that the atonement “involves an impeachment of the benevolence of God,” thus proceeds: “That he is a *holy* being, and that sin is opposed to his *perfections* and a rebellion against his authority, is agreed on both sides. It is as foreign to the purpose to contend, that he might pardon it without such a substitution, as to say that he might put a stop to moral evil, without the many miseries both of mind and body, which we perceive to be entailed on it. . . . It may be said, that what is evil in itself may be overruled to good, by the wise Being who permitted it. This, is, indeed, the proper solution of the difficulty. But let a similar mode of reasoning be allowed on the present subject: and then, who will presume to say, that the *honour* of the moral government of God may not finally be promoted by a dispensation, which, without disparaging his attribute of mercy, shows in the strongest point of view the *deadly nature of sin*, as a *breach of the order of the universe?*”

(Lect. on the Catech. p. 257, 258.)

through Christ, and under his title to them. We obtain them through the merit of Christ's obedience exclusively; not indeed without repentance and faith on our part: yet not as if such qualities in us were in any degree meritorious. The best of penitents not being meritorious, the benefits of the Redeemer, divine favour and reward of every sort, are even to the best entirely free. And none being meritorious while under the power of sin, the impenitent have not even a plausible claim to them. Hence, though Christ merited reward sufficient for all men, we are to regard him as not accepting more, or not transferring more, of this branch of his own remuneration, than will give existence and earthly supplies to all, probation and initial grace to all but dying children and the weaker kind of idiots, fuller grace to those who improve that already bestowed, and heaven to those who die in the Lord. On this topic, no further enlargement is required by the subject principally before us.

In conclusion, I have only to submit again this course of argument to the judgment of my Rev. Brethren,—and to suggest, that in bringing such views before their flocks, should they think fit to do so, some hints for the christian improvement of their hearers flow naturally from our lofty theme.

The doctrine of the Atonement, as now developed, requires for a due conception of it, most elevated ideas of the *purity of God*. Fallen creatures become holy by conquering sin. Creatures not fallen are holy by not committing it, but obeying God. With God, however, sin is impossible: for it is declared, that “it is *impossible* for God to lie,” and that “he *cannot* deny himself.” The least unholiness on his part, and the least countenance of evil in his creatures, are against his very nature: in other words, we deny God's divinity, by supposing him to yield to sin in any degree whatever. With such a thought, how impressive will be our admonitions to those under our charge, ‘to be holy as God is holy!’ How impressively do such thoughts declare, that virtue is to be desired for its own sake!

In the doctrine of the Atonement is found the deepest lesson of *humility*. One sort of natural religion encourages men to compromise for sin by such regular conduct as is within their power,—poor, feeble, and unworthy as their character will be at best. Another code of natural religion prescribes various degrees of mere penitent feeling, and a corresponding life, yet without that sense of God's unbounded indignation against evil which leaves the sinner no hope in himself. But the sacrifice of the cross, where the Victim is consumed by the severity of the divine holiness, bids the sinner prostrate his soul even while it lays hold on that altar, and be humbled as into nothing in awe of a purity

so inflexible. How forcibly may we thus inculcate on our flocks, that, to have both the benefit and the entire comfort of the cross, they should know nothing but the cross!

Connected with these views of the Atonement, is its illustration of the unbounded *evil of sin*. Our corrupt and weakened minds know not enough of the nature of things, to understand why the least transgression is intrinsically bad and of bad effect, is unqualified mischief; innumerable misdeeds are concealed; innumerable others are disregarded; and the world proceeds as well to appearance, as if they had not been committed: and we are thus tempted to believe that light offences, though best avoided, are not essentially baneful. But in the sacrifice rendered to God's holiness, we learn how these things are accounted of in that world where there is no illusion. Not the least of them is pardonable without the Atonement: not the least of them therefore, is other than morally base, without any qualification, and radically injurious, without the slightest intermixture of a beneficial property. And though some for whose souls we watch, may regard this as but a dull truth, of no exciting interest, those who have so improved the Holy Spirit as to have pure moral sensibility, will find it a crushing thought when they reflect on their many infirmities. Tell them, and tell your every hearer, that, as God has "condemned sin," all sin, in the person of Christ, *they* must 'condemn all sin' on their parts. They will "condemn sin," by convicting themselves of all the depraved conduct and depraved thoughts they indulge in; by forsaking them all, as base, and unworthy of a candidate for heaven; by continuing humble after their best reformation, and feeling themselves still "unprofitable servants;" and by renouncing the whole idea of merit before God, in even their most virtuous deeds and affections, and so pleading no ground of mercy but the Atonement of Jesus. Tell them, that to make this plea genuine, they must remember, practically, that our Lord was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh," that their souls might in all things be "conformed to his pure image."

Lastly: In viewing the Atonement, our nature is wrought upon, in the cause of holiness, by its *sensibilities*, which are, under grace, our deepest and most effectual controlling power. We see the Victim bending under his weight of sorrows.* Were he the criminal his enemies declared him to be, we should pity him, though we deemed his punish-

* It was sorrow, for a divine person to have the sensations and anxieties of a creature. It was sorrow, for a divine person to be humbled to the society of fallen beings; deeper humiliation than for an honest man to be sent to keep company with thieves; or a virtuous woman to be compelled to associate with female vagabonds. The sorrows of the agony, the buffetings, the scourge, the insults, the thorns, the cross, speak for themselves.

ment just. But he knows no sin; no guile is found in his mouth: our pity therefore is unchecked; and we sympathise with him, as we would with the martyr at the stake, or the babe tortured and slowly murdered by a savage. Nay; not only is *he* innocent, but *we* are guilty; and it is to avert from us the indignation of God's holiness, that he is led to the slaughter. Here is the deep source of our tears. We have too much at stake to object to the sacrifice; pardon, life, grace, eternity, all depend on his woful labour of love; we cannot say, nay, to even one of the agonies of the immaculate Son of God. Yet we may shed the tear of commiseration, and pour out the whole heart, at the thought that he dies for *us*. And it is in this tender disposition,—so we all know, my Rev. Brethren, and so we will all assure our flocks,—it is in this tender disposition, that we are most strongly moved to abhor and to relinquish the sins which cost him so much for their expiation. In this tender disposition, constantly cherished, we shall be most strongly moved to love our Redeemer always, and be faithful to Him until death.

APPENDIX A.—page 3.

THE LARGER DOCTRINE OF MEDIATION.

Christ is "heir of all things,—he is before all things, and by him all things consist—by him are [exist] all things, and we [exist] by him,—all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made,—all things are delivered into his hand, and given to him by the Father,—because he became obedient unto the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Thus it is that the "fulness" πληρωμα is "his," the infinite dominion of the Supreme Being: of which "fulness have all we received," life and all temporal and spiritual blessings here, and the hope of glory hereafter:

Lord Bacon, in his Confession of Faith, gives the following statement of what I have called the larger doctrine of the Mediation:—

"I believe that God is so holy, pure, and jealous, as it is impossible for him to be pleased in any creature, though the work of his own hands; so that neither angel, man, nor world, could stand, or can stand, one moment in his eyes, without beholding the same in the face of a Mediator; and therefore, that before him with whom all things are present, the Lamb of God was slain before all worlds; without which eternal counsel of his, it was impossible for him to have descended to any work of creation; but he should have enjoyed the blessed and individual society of three persons in godhead for ever.

"But that, out of his eternal and infinite goodness and love, purposing to become a Creator, and to communicate to his creatures, he ordained in his eternal counsel, that one person of the godhead should be united to one nature, and to one particular of his creatures; that so, in the person of the Mediator, the true ladder might be fixed, whereby God might descend to his creatures, and his creatures might ascend to God: so that God, by the reconciliation of the Mediator, turning his countenance towards his creatures (though not in equal light and degree) made way unto the dispensation of his most holy and secret will; whereby some of his creatures might stand, and keep their state; others might possibly fall and be restored; and others might fall and not be restored to their estate, but yet remain in being, though under wrath and corruption; all with respect to the Mediator, which is the great mystery, and perfect center of all God's ways with his creatures; and unto which, all his other works and wonders do but serve and refer."—(Scholar Armed, V. I. p. 2, 3.)

The author of the Charge takes the liberty of suggesting, that the "bowing at the Name of Jesus" done in form (and presumably in spirit) in the Creed, is a solemn confession of his mediatorial lordship. The worship of him as God is a distinct act. So is the recognising of his intervention, in praying, &c., through him. His high function and prerogative as the universal mediatorial LORD is the matter alluded to in Philip. ii. 10, 11; and in the Creed. This relation of Christ to us, different from any borne by the other divine persons, appears to demand a distinct and explicit act of homage; and on no occasion can it be more appropriately rendered than in reciting the Creed.

APPENDIX B.—page 7.

MEANINGS OF THE WORD JUSTICE.

To scholars and literary persons, the sense of the words just and justice given in this part of the Charge, is familiar. But as the rule of the Convention, to publish these episcopal documents, will bring it into a more general circulation, and as all may wish to have the matter fresh before them, some further authorities may properly be adduced.

Archbishop Cranmer and the Reformers who acted with him say, in the Necessary Doctrine and Erudition, &c.,—"without whose grace no man can do no good thing, but following his free will in the state of a sinner, increaseth his own *injustice*, and multiplieth his sin." By "*injustice*" is meant 'unrighteousness or wickedness:' justice of course is the opposite. (Man's Appeal to the Gospel, p. 264.) It may be, that the word "*injustice*" means here 'want of justification,' i. e. condemnation.

Bishop Hooper, in the Preface to his Exposition of the Ten Commandments, says,—"as by the sin and offence of one man, death was extended and made common to all men unto condemnation; as Paul saith, Rom. v. so by the *justice* of one, is derived life unto all men unto justification." In our present translation, the word is "*righteousness*," meaning the holy obedience of Christ.—(Bishop White's Comparison, V. 2. p. 84.)

In the Homilies, the words before us are used in various senses; of which a sufficient illustration occurs on page 19 of Swords' edition. 1. The word justice is put for Christ's atonement, and his righteousness, obedience, or holiness. "Three things must go together in our justification. Upon God's part, his great mercy and grace; upon Christ's part, *justice*, that is, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption, by the offering of his body, and shedding of his blood, with fulfilling of the law perfectly and thoroughly; and upon our part, true and lively faith," &c. . . . "so that in our justification, there is not only God's mercy and grace, but also his [Christ's] *justice*, which the apostle calleth the *justice* of God, [the translation "*righteousness*" is given on the opposite page of the Homily,] and it consisteth in paying our ransom, and fulfilling of the law:" again, "that which their [men's] infirmity lacked, Christ's *justice* hath supplied." 2. The word is put for the divine attribute of justice, but whether in the merely popular sense noticed in the Charge, or in the more general one of "*righteousness*" above adverted to, is not clear in this place. We read, "the satisfaction of God's *justice*," already quoted; also, "whereby our ransom might be fully paid, the law fulfilled, and his *justice* fully satisfied." On p. 17, we read, "to make a sacrifice and satisfaction, or (as it may be called) *amends* to his Father for our sins, to assuage his wrath and indignation conceived against us for the same;" and in the Homily for Good Friday it is called "the ransom and whole *amends*," the "penalty," the "payment" "to discharge us quite;" which expressions favour the doctrine founded on the popular sense of justice. Yet the word "ransom," and calling the atonement "a manifest token of God's great wrath and displeasure towards sin," and using it as an argument for us "to abhor sin thoroughly," (p. 359, 360) all which point rather to the attribute of holiness, allow us to suppose that the word "*justice*"

is employed in a sense not entirely definite. 3. It signifies assumed innocence in man, and the assumed sufficiency of his works; "the grace of God doth not shut out the justice of God, [meaning as before, the righteousness of Christ,] in our justification, but only shutteth out the *justice* of man, that is to say, the *justice* of our works, as to be merits of deserving our justification;" man's innocence and sufficiency are excluded under the name of justice. 4. It signifies the obedience of a believer, neither innocent, nor sufficient, nor meritorious; "neither doth faith shut out the *justice* of our good works, necessarily to be done afterwards of duty to God:" the obedience of a godly life, is the obvious meaning. 5. The word "just" is used for justified; "it excludeth them, [our good works,] so that we may not do them to this intent, to be made *just* by doing of them." There are thus no less than five meanings of these words on one page of the Homilies. But the predominant sense, the only one under heads 3, and 4, the only one pertinent under head 1, corresponds with holiness; that marked 2 is uncertain; and that marked 5 is not relevant.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor quotes to the same effect from St. Bernard:—"our innocence, which in strictness of divine judgment would be found spotted and stained, by the mercy of our Saviour may be accepted. St. Bernard expresses this well; *Nostra siqua est humilis justitia, recta forsitan sed non pura*; our humble *righteousness* is perhaps right in the eyes of God, but not pure; that is, accepted by his merey, but it is such as dares not contend in judgment." (Sermons, vol. 3. p. 50.)

The Saxon Confession says—"Originall sinne is a want of originall *justice* which ought to be in us." (Ely's Contrast, p. 74.) The meaning is plain. It agrees with our Article 9th, which declares that by original sin "man is very far gone from original *righteousness*;" in the Latin, "*ab originali justitia quam longissime distet.*"

Jones, of Nayland, in his second Lecture on Hebrews, says,—“it is an universal doctrine, common to all ages, which a prophet delivered and an apostle hath confirmed, that ‘the *just* shall live by faith.’ Let him be as *just* as he will, his life is not from his *justice*, but from his faith;” &c. In other words, ‘let him be as holy as he will, his life is not from his holiness.’

Dr. Hammond, on Matth. i. 19, "Joseph being a *just* man," paraphrases it "a merciful pious man," and says in a note that the word "signifies ordinarily works of mercy, charity." On Rom. iii. 26, "that God might be *just*," he gives this paraphrase, "whereby God appears to all to be a most gracious and merciful God;" and in the note he adds,—“the word *seldom* in these books, *if ever*, belongs, or is applied to the act of *vindicative* or *punitive justice*, but (as in the case of Joseph) for the abating of the rigour of exact law, and bringing in moderation, or equity, or mercy instead of it;" he grants however that God may also be denominated "just in that other respect," though it be not the sense of this passage.

Calmet gives these definitions. "Justice is generally put for goodness, equity, that virtue which renders to every man his due; often for virtue and piety in general; lastly, for the conjunction of all those virtues which make an honest man. See Ezek. xviii. 5—9. [‘If a man be *just*, and do that which is lawful and right hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is *just*, he shall surely live.’] Justice is placed in opposition to mercy; as a virtue which severely avenges the dishonour offered to God by sin. For the clemency, mercy and indulgence which God shows to sinners. It is frequently taken in this sense in Isaiah. It is used sometimes when we are speaking of a good-natured, mild, indulgent man. Thus St. Matthew tells us that Joseph being a just man," &c.

Calvin rejects this construction of the conduct of Joseph, and makes "the justice which is here commended to consist in the hatred and detestation of wickedness;"

i. e. to be synonymous with holiness. And so I understand his exposition of Rom. iii. 26.

Dr. Campbell, in Matth. 1. 19, translates, "Joseph being a worthy man." In the note, he says—"Every body knows that the word *δικαιος* admits two senses. The first is *just*, in the strictest acceptation, attentive to the rules of equity in our dealings, particularly in what concerns property and judicial proceedings. The second is *righteous* in the most extensive sense, including *every* essential part of a *good character*. In this sense it is equivalent as Chrysostom remarks, to the epithet *αγαθος*, *virtuous, worthy, upright*."

Dr. Dwight, in his 10th Sermon, has the following remarks.—"1. Justice, as applied to cases in which property is concerned, denotes the exchange of one thing for another, of equal value. . . . This is called Commutative Justice. 2. As applied to the conduct of a magistrate towards subjects, it denotes exactly that treatment of the subject which his personal conduct merits. . . . Justice, in this sense, is properly called Distributive Justice. 3. Justice, in a much more extended sense than either of these, denotes that which is *right* upon the whole, in all cases; that which is *fittest* and *most useful* to be done: in other words, that which will most promote the universal good. In this sense, justice is, together with its corresponding term, *righteousness*, used as synonymous with benevolence or virtue; and involves the *whole of moral excellence*. This is sometimes called General Justice. This use of the word is very frequent; and many persons appear to make no distinction between this sense of the word and the last mentioned. Yet the meanings are widely different. In the former sense, justice is the conduct of a ruler only; in the latter, it is applicable to *all* intelligent beings: in the former, it is a course of conduct respecting a single object, according to his merit or demerit; in the latter, it always respects the universe.—Justice, when considered as an attribute, is the disposition which gives birth to these, or to either of these, kinds of conduct." As Dr. Dwight does not treat of the divine holiness, as an attribute, it may be inferred that in these remarks on justice, in its 3d sense, he has given the substance of what he would have said, had he adopted that as a distinct topic. The remarks are not so full as might be desired. But they show a predominant sense of the word justice widely different from the popular restricted one.

Saurin is more satisfactory. In his discourse on the Holiness of God, he has this line of argument.—"We cannot help acknowledging, when we reflect on our own ideas, that the difference between a *just* and an *unjust* action is not founded on interest only. And since we cannot help venerating the Supreme Being more when he follows certain laws than when he violates them, it is plain we cannot help acknowledging that there is a *justice* independent on the supreme law which hath prescribed it. Should any one require me to give him a clear notion of this *justice*, this *order*, or *holiness*, which is neither founded on the interest of him who obeys it, nor on the authority of the Supreme Being who commands it; this should be my answer. By *justice* I understand that fitness, harmony, or proportion, which ought to be between the conduct of an intelligent being, and the circumstances in which he is placed, and the relations that he bears to other beings. . . . All mankind have a general notion of this proportion, harmony, or fitness. . . . Always when a man perceives that a particular action hath such a fitness or hath it not, he will declare without hesitation that the action is *just* or *unjust*. . . This is a general notion of *holiness*. . . The general principle of *holiness*, as hath been already shown, is a perfect proportion, harmony, or fitness between the conduct of an intelligent being and his relations to other beings. The *holiness* of God is that perfect harmony, proportion, or fitness that subsists between his conduct (if I may be allowed thus to speak of God) and his relations to other beings. . . . on the nature of those relations depends the nature

of that *order, justice, or holiness*, which he inviolably maintains in respect to them. . . . The *holiness* of God is complete in all its parts. He hath all virtues, or rather he hath one virtue that includes all others: that is, the love of order. He is *equally just* in his laws, *true* in his language, his promises are *faithful*, and his thoughts are *right*."—Beautiful illustrations of the wide and full meaning of justice! it is another name for holiness. It may however be added—that the holiness of God is *also* "that perfect harmony, proportion, or fitness," that regulates his conduct with reference to his own perfection. On this principle I interpret a further remark of Saurin, in the same discourse, "God is the *happy God*, because he is the *holy God*."

Archbishop Tillotson defines *justice* very closely in the popular sense. But his remarks on *holiness* may properly be introduced in connexion with the admirable ones just given. "The *holiness* of God is not a particular, but an universal perfection, and runs through all the moral perfections of the divine nature; it is the beauty of the divine nature, and the perfection of all his other perfections: Take away this, and you bring an universal stain and blemish upon the divine nature; without holiness, power would be oppression; and wisdom, subtilty; and sovereignty, tyranny; and goodness, malice and envy; and justice, cruelty; and mercy, foolish pity; and truth, falsehood. And therefore the scripture speaks of this, as God's highest excellency and perfection. God is said to be *glorious in holiness*: Exod. xv. ii. *holiness* is called *God's throne*. Ps. xlvii. 8. *He sitteth upon the throne of his holiness*. This is that which makes heaven." These further remarks are valuable. "If *holiness* be a perfection of the divine nature, and a property of God; if, in the notion of God, there be included an everlasting separation and distance from moral imperfection, and eternal repugnance to sin and iniquity: from hence we may infer, that there is an *intrinsic good and evil* in things; and the reasons and respects of *moral good and evil* do not depend upon any mutable, and inconstant, and arbitrary principle, but are fixed and immutable, eternal and indispensable. Therefore they do not seem to me to speak so safely, who make the divine *will*, precisely and abstractly considered, the rule of moral good and evil; as if there were nothing good or evil *in its own nature* antecedently to the will of God, but that all things are therefore good or evil because God *wills* them to be so: For if this were so, goodness, and righteousness, and truth, and faithfulness, would not be essential and necessary, and immutable properties of the divine nature, but accidental and arbitrary, and uncertain, and mutable; which is to suppose that God, if he pleased, might be otherwise than good, and just, and true. . . . And this does no ways prejudice the *liberty* of God; for this is the highest perfection, to be *necessarily* good, and just, and true; and a liberty or possibility to be otherwise, is impotency and imperfection. For liberty no where speaks perfection, but where the things and actions about which it is conversant are indifferent; in all other things it is the highest perfection not to be free and indifferent; but immutable and fixed, and necessarily bound up by the eternal laws of goodness, and justice, and truth, so that it shall not be possible to swerve from them; and this is the perfection of the *divine nature*, which we call his *holiness*." (Serm. fol. V. 2. p. 587, &c.)

THE TENDENCY OF CERTAIN DIVINES TOWARDS THE
DOCTRINE OF THIS CHARGE.

Some theologians address the atonement to God's justice and holiness conjointly. To me there appears an incongruity in such reasoning; at the least, it goes beyond the necessity of the case. Holiness is a principle; justice (in the popular sense) is one of the rules of action prescribed by that principle; and if the principle be satisfied or vindicated, the rule so far ceases to be obligatory. If therefore God's holiness be reconciled, his justice requires nothing more. This class of theologians therefore, approximate the doctrine of the Charge.

Others make the atonement a vindication of the *honour* of God's law. But justice (in the popular sense) is concerned only with the administration of law, and an honourable administration of it. The honour of the law itself means either the personal honour of the sovereign Lawgiver, or the trueness (to moral perfection) of the principle which dictated the law: and that principle, in the case before us, is the divine holiness; in which centres also the personal honour of the sovereign Lawgiver.

If these remarks are allowed to be just, there will be an apology for appending quotations enough to satisfy the claims of the subject.

Stackhouse, referring to Bates' Harmony, thus writes:—"To declare God's *hatred against sin*, which is *essential* to the perfection of his *nature*; to prevent the commission of sin, by preserving in men an holy fear of offending; and to maintain the *honour of God's laws*, which would otherwise fall under contempt; it was expedient that the breach of his commands should not go unpunished. But then, how, or on whom, this punishment was to be inflicted, is the question," &c. Now, "hatred against sin" is a dictate of holiness; and the "honour of God's laws" pertains to the same attribute. Hence it was natural, in this worthy compiler, while declaring the atonement to be a "satisfaction to the divine justice," to argue likewise that it was "for the vindication of *his honour*, [as well as] the reparation due to his justice," and even to assert explicitly that "the *holiness* and justice of his nature . . . would preponderate with him to exact the penalty." (Body of Div. fol. p. 578.)

Archbishop Tillotson. "Therefore to maintain the *honour of his laws*, rather than sin should pass unpunished, God would lay the punishment of it upon his only begotten Son, the dearest Person to him in the world: which is a *greater* testimony of his high *displeasure against sin*, and of his tender regard and concernment for the *honour of his laws*, than if the sinner had suffered the punishment due to it in his own person." As before, the "honour of his laws" and "his high displeasure against sin" are topics which refer to the *holiness* of God; yet they are here connected with his "justice," as is frequently declared in the sermon. It is singular that the distinguished author did not see that he made justice receive *more* than its due, an infliction "greater" than the "punishment due in the sinner's own person:" such a view seems fatal to that theory. But an atonement to *holiness* bears no relation to the amount supposed to be due from the sinner: it must simply be a sufficient vindication, whether the suffering be in the same measure, or less, or greater. (Serm. V. 1. p. 447.)

Bishop Horsley, I cannot but think, must have used the word "justice" in its large sense, not in the restricted popular one, in the passage I shall quote: for, the "declaring a disapprobation of sin" is but incidental to the administration of justice, not its primary object; and "good policy" belongs altogether to sovereignty; and "securing the ends of punishment" is not inflicting punishment itself, though it may produce other suffering: as usual however with divines who adopt the Justice theory, Bishop H. is not entirely free from incongruity; the sufferings of Christ being called the "punishment" of our "guilt," in the next paragraph but one. After remarking, against those who allege that the atonement presumes God to be an implacable being, that his anger is but figurative, since "the divine nature is unsusceptible of the perturbations of passion," Bishop Horsley proceeds: "But nothing hinders but that the sufferings of Christ, which could only in a figurative sense be an appeasement or satisfaction of God's *wrath*, might be in the most literal meaning of the words, a satisfaction to his *justice*. It is easy to understand that the interests of God's government, the peace and order of the great kingdom over which he rules the whole world of moral agents, might require that his *disapprobation of sin* should be solemnly *declared and testified* in his manner of forgiving it: It is easy to understand, that the exaction of vicarious sufferings on the part of him who undertook to be the intercessor for a rebellious race, amounted to such a declaration. These sufferings, by which the *end of punishment* might be answered, being once sustained, it is easy to perceive, that the same principle of wisdom, the same providential care of his creation which must have determined the Deity to inflict punishment, had no atonement been made, would now determine him to spare. Thus, to speak figuratively, his anger was appeased, but his justice was literally satisfied; and the sins of men no longer calling for punishment when the *ends of punishment* were secured, were literally expiated. The person sustaining the sufferings in consideration of which the guilt of others may consistently with the principles of *good policy*, be remitted, was in the literal sense of the word, so literally as no other victim ever was, a sacrifice, and his blood shed for the remission of sin, was literally the *matter* of the expiation." (Nine Sermons, p. 195, 196.) It seems evident that justice is here used in its large sense, of which holiness is the predominant idea; if so, the doctrine coincides with that of the Charge, if not, the word is employed somewhat vaguely, and the doctrine is but an approximation.

In Poole's Annotations, the phrase "that he might be just" (Rom. iii. 26) is expounded—"That no wrong might be done to the *essential purity* of his nature, or *rectitude* of his will, nor yet to his *immediate justice*, by which he cannot but hate sin, and abhor the sinner as such." The expression "immediate justice" seems to imply that the annotator regarded it as a less fundamental point in the doctrine of the atonement, than God's "essential purity, or rectitude."

Baxter says—"The reasons of Christ's sufferings, were as a sacrifice to expiate our sins by his suffering in our stead, to demonstrate the *holiness* of God, his *justice* and truth, and the authority and equity of his law, that God and his laws may not be despised, nor the world encouraged by impunity to unbelief and sin. And Christ's sufferings are satisfactory to divine justice . . . because they *better attained the ends* of the Governor and Lawgiver, than the damnation of all the world would have done." Now, we cannot conceive that the "ends" of mere justice, in the popular sense, could be "better attained," than by the infliction of the penalty, "damnation," on all who deserved it. The "ends" therefore "of the Governor and Lawgiver," referred to by Mr. Baxter, must have been either different or more comprehensive. And thus the word "justice" must be understood in its larger sense, or rather in that portion of its meaning which quadrates with holiness: the atonement was designed, as the extract declares, "to demonstrate the *holiness* of God;" and the reasoning would have

been clearer had no allusion been made to his "justice." (Pract. Works, fol. V. 4. p. 234, 235.) Elsewhere, Mr. Baxter enumerates "the *ends* of government, viz. God's glory, and man's obedience, and the common good;" and he adds—"Christ's satisfaction is at least as excellent a means for the attainment of the said ends of government, as the punishment of the sinner would have been; seeing in this there is as full a demonstration of governing, *justice*, wisdom, and power, and of God's *holy sin-hating nature*, and as full a vindication of the law from contempt, and as full a warning to sinners that they presume not, as if themselves had suffered." On this I remark, as before, that a "demonstration of justice," in the popular sense, is not so completely made by substitution, as by the suffering of the offenders personally; of course the word should have its larger meaning, and agree with God's "holy sin-hating nature." The illustration of the divine "wisdom and power" by the atonement has no reference to the present discussion. (V. 2. p. 228)

Macknight also appears to use the word justice in the larger sense. On Rom. iii. 26, he says, "Now, as in this and in the preceding verse, the apostle assures us, that Christ's death is a proof of God's *righteousness*, both when he passed by the sins of mankind before Christ came, and when in the present time he passes them by, we are led therefrom to conclude, that Christ's death hath rendered these exercises of God's mercy consistent with his character as the *righteous moral* governor of the universe: . . . that he should be *just* in such an act, might have seemed incredible, had we not received such an account of the atonement." On verse 25, he writes, "God's *righteousness* or *justice* might have appeared doubtful, on account of his having so long passed by the sins of men, unless, in the mean time, he had made a sufficient display of his *hatred of sin*. But *such* a display being made in the death of Christ, his *justice* is thereby fully proved." The "hatred of sin," I repeat, is a dictate of holiness; and justice, in the restricted popular sense, is but one of the rules of action prescribed by this all-governing principle in the Deity. And God's "character as the righteous moral governor" is better resolved into his universal holy character, than into the one rectitude of magistral justice. As Dr. Macknight was a very cautious writer, it seems but proper to think that he used the word justice in its comprehensive meaning. On 1 John i. 9. he comments, "God is faithful to his promise, and *just to his Son* whom he sent to save sinners, so that he can forgive sins to us," &c. In the popular sense, God would be but "just" to those whose debts were paid by Christ, not to exact them again; as is argued by Faber, and as is included by Doddridge on this text. But this idea is avoided by Macknight; and the fair inference is, that he did not regard the atonement as addressed to God's justice in this sense. God's being "just to his Son," in forgiving penitents, is a topic not included in the particular argument before me. The interpretation given to this passage by Dr. Hammond appears to be the true one,—“God having *promised* pardon to all humble penitents upon sincere reformation, is obliged in fidelity and justice to make good this promise to you;” the meritorious cause of this favour is given in verse 7, “the death of Christ is beneficial (to us, who thus imitate his purity) to cleanse us from all the guilt of past sins, and present infirmities.”

Saurin, though he speaks of "conciliating God's *justice* with his love," shows that he intended it in the large sense, so admirably illustrated in the extracts already made. "What saith the grand mystery of religion, . . . I mean the mystery of the cross? Doth it not declare that God is supremely *holy*?" Again; without an atonement, "his *love of order* and his veracity would be blemished." (V. 1. p. 298, 245.)

Bishop Burnet on the second Article, explains the atonement without employing the word justice, and in such a way as will agree with the other theory. "Thus it is plain, that Christ's death was our sacrifice: the meaning of which is this, that God,

intending to reconcile the world to himself, and to encourage sinners to repent and turn to him, thought fit to offer the pardon of sin, together with the other blessings of his gospel, in such a way as should *demonstrate* both the *guilt of sin*, and *his hatred of it*; and yet with that, his love of sinners, and his compassions towards them. A free pardon without a sacrifice had not been so agreeable neither to the *majesty* of the great governor of the world, nor the authority of his laws," &c. If by the "guilt of sin" he meant its evil, or what the apostle terms it, "sinfulness," the "demonstration" of its guilt was required by holiness. If the guilt of the sinner be meant, i. e. his obligation to be punished, (see Bishop Pearson,) the mere "demonstration" of that fact was not a work of justice, in the popular sense, but was rather a demand of the holiness of God. The tone of the extract is entirely to that effect. In speaking of the agony of Christ, in the same paragraph, Bishop B. says, "We can only imagine a vast sense of the *heinousness of sin*, and a deep *indignation* at the *dishonour done to God* by it," &c. All this refers to holiness: the Saviour could scarcely have been "indignant" while paying a debt to justice which he had assumed to pay; but he might well share in the "indignation" of divine holiness against the sin which required his agonising atonement.

Archbishop Magee says, of a sacrifice for sin—"The whole may be considered as a sensible and striking *representation* of a punishment, which the sinner was conscious he deserved from God's justice: and then, on the part of God, it becomes a public declaration of his *holy displeasure against sin*, and of his merciful compassion for the sinner;" &c. The sacrifice, being but a "representation" of punishment, was not punishment itself; and this excludes the idea of its being addressed to justice, in the restricted sense. And God's "holy displeasure against sin" arises from his attribute of holiness.—Such appears a fair view of this definition; but as Dr. Magee speaks elsewhere of a "transfer of the penal effects" of men's iniquities to the victim, his meaning may have been different. I think however, he may be claimed as tending to the theory of the Charge. (Magee on Atonement; New York, 1813, p. 36, 50.)

I am indebted to Archbishop Magee for the following extract from Dr. S. Clarke: (p. 115,) "the death of Christ was necessary to make the pardon of sin reconcilable, not perhaps absolutely with *strict justice*, (for we cannot presume to say that God might not, consistently with mere *justice*, have remitted as much of his own right as he pleased)—but . . . to make the pardon of sin consistent with the wisdom of God, in his government of the world; and to be a proper *attestation* of his irreconcilable *hatred against all unrighteousness*."

Dr. West, of Massachusetts, offers the following definition,—“the true reason why God required an atonement for sin was, that the *real disposition* of his own infinite mind, toward such an object, might *appear*; even though he pardoned and saved the sinner: could the *character* of God, the *disposition* of the divine mind both toward *holiness and sin*, otherwise *appear* to equal advantage; there is not the least reason to imagine that he would ever have required an atonement.” This definition directs the atonement to the preservation of God's holy "character" as judged of by intelligent creatures; and is so far correct. Had it gone farther, and addressed it to the vindication of the attribute itself, Dr. W. would not perhaps have written, on a subsequent page, "The death of the sinner is a glass in which we see the righteousness, the *punitive justice* of God: So, also, is the death of *Christ*." Not so: the accurate doctrine is, that, through Christ, "punitive justice" foregoes its claim beyond the present life, and yields to mercy; the holiness of God being vindicated in consenting to this remission. (West on Atonement, 2d edition p. 15, 64.)

Dr. Chalmers, in his sermon on the Necessity of a Mediator, (the 6th in the volume re-published in New York, 1819) speaks vaguely on the point before us; by the

atonement, "every attribute of the Divinity is exalted;" "without one perfection of the Godhead being surrendered;" "to bend, as it were, the holy and everlasting attributes of God." In the last sermon, however, the 17th, there is this plain language,—“not till we see the blended love and *holiness* of the Godhead in our propitiation not till we look to that great transaction, by which the *purity* of the divine nature is vindicated, and yet the sinner is delivered from the coming vengeance, shall we be freed from the dominion of sin,” &c.

Dr. Wardlaw mingles the two theories, yet appears to me to favour most that of Holiness. Out of many passages, I select the two following:—"the atonement . . . where God appears in all the majesty of offended *holiness* and inflexible *justice*, and at the same time delighting in mercy. The two characters, 'God is *Light*,' [*holiness*,] and 'God is Love,' are alike illustrated by the atonement of Jesus so that while we approach with boldness to the throne of grace, we are not allowed to forget that it is a throne of *holiness*:"—"The display of holy indignation was made by the God of love: and the display of love, equally conspicuous in the same event, was made by the God of *holiness*." (Discourses, Andover, 1815, p. 243, 250.)

Dr. Dwight has these remarks. "This atonement I have explained to consist in making sufficient amends for the faults which they have committed, and placing the law and government of God in such a situation, that when sinners are pardoned, both shall be equally honorable as before. The motives to obedience, also, must in no degree be lessened. Further, the *character of God*, when pardoning sinners, must appear perfectly consistent with itself and exactly expressed by the law. Finally, God must be seen to be no less *opposed to sin*, and no less *delighted with holiness*, than when the law was formed.—This doctrine is completely established by the text, God is here said to have set forth Christ to *declare his righteousness*, or as is better rendered by Macknight, for a *proof his own righteousness* in passing by the sins, In this passage, *the end* for which Christ was set forth to be a propitiation, is asserted to be, that Christ might *declare*, or be a *proof* of, the *righteousness of God*, in passing by or remitting sins which were past, and of *his righteousness* also, at the present time, when justifying believers. In these assertions, we are taught in the most unambiguous manner, that, unless Christ had been set forth as a propitiation, the *righteousness of God*, in remitting past and present sins, would not have been manifested. It is also declared in the same decisive manner, that, if Christ had not been set forth as a propitiation, God would not have been *just*, when justifying believers. Christ therefore, in the character of a propitiation, and only in this character, has made the pardoning or justification of sinners consistent with the *justice* of God." As there is an apparent distinction made here between the "righteousness of God" and his being "just," Dr. D. may have intended to use the latter word in its popular sense; but such a distinction, if it were designed, will not avail for the Justice theory; as the passage first quoted may evince; [as will further appear in the note given below;]* and as will more fully be proved by one of the concluding paragraphs of the Sermon. (56th.) "If the atonement of Christ consisted in making such amends for the disobedience of man as should place the law, government, and character, of

* After inserting in the manuscript the extracts from Dr. Dwight, the following paragraphs were observed, in Sermons 57 and 64. "There is no substantial resemblance between the payment of a debt for an insolvent debtor, and the *satisfaction* rendered to *distributive justice* for a criminal. The debtor owes money; and this is all he owes. If then, all the money which he owes is paid and accepted, justice is completely satisfied, and the creditor can demand nothing more But, when a criminal has failed of doing his duty, as a subject, to lawful government, and violated laws which he was bound to obey, he has committed a *fault*, for which he has merited pun-

God in such a light, that he could forgive sinners of the human race without any inconsistency; then these amends, or this atonement, were all absolutely necessary,

ishment. In this case, justice, not in the commutative, but in the *distributive* sense; the only sense in which it can be concerned with this subject; demands, not the future obedience, *nor an equivalent* for the omitted obedience, but *merely the punishment*, of the offender. The *only* reparation for the wrong which he has done, required by *strict justice*, is this *punishment*: a reparation necessarily and always required. There are cases however, in which an *atonement* may be accepted: an atonement by which the honour and efficacy of the government may be preserved, and yet the offender pardoned." [To what is this atonement addressed? not to 'strict justice,' it would seem, for that required the 'punishment' of the offender, the offender himself, as the 'only reparation.' Dr. D. proceeds.] "In such a case however, the personal character of the offender is unaltered. Before the atonement was made, he was a criminal. After the atonement is made, he is not less a criminal. As a criminal, he before merited punishment. As a criminal, he no less merits it now. The turpitude of his character remains the same; and while it remains, he cannot fail to deserve exactly the same punishment. After the atonement is made, it cannot be truly said therefore, any more than before, that he does not deserve punishment. But if the atonement be accepted, it may be truly said, that, consistently with *honour of the government*, and the public good, he may be pardoned. This act of grace is all that he can hope for. From these observations it is manifest, that the atonement of Christ in no sense makes it necessary, that God should accept [pardon] the sinner on the ground of justice; but only renders his forgiveness not inconsistent with the *divine character*." [There being 'satisfaction rendered to distributive justice,' for the sinner, why is not God bound to 'accept' or pardon him 'on the ground of justice?' criminal as he remains, justice once 'satisfied' has no demand on him; whatever be his demerit, justice, being 'satisfied,' has no claim on him for punishment; justice itself therefore must let him go free. I charge not this incongruity on Dr. Dwight, but on the Justice theory. Had he omitted that, and addressed the atonement *merely* to the 'divine character' and the 'honour of the divine government,' in other words, to God's holiness and holy sovereignty, the inconsistency would have been avoided.—I subjoin the other extract.] "Christ in his sufferings and death made a complete atonement for the sins of mankind. In other words, he rendered to the law, *character*, and *government* of God such peculiar *honour*, as to make it consistent with their *unchangeable nature and glory*, that sinners should, on the proper conditions, be forgiven. But the atonement inferred no obligation of justice, on the part of God, to forgive them." [Why not, if justice was 'satisfied' by the atonement?] "The supposition, incautiously admitted by some divines, that Christ satisfied the demands of the law by his active and passive obedience, in the same manner as the payment of a debt satisfies the demand of a creditor, has, if I mistake not, been heretofore proved to be unfounded in the scriptures. We owed God our obedience, and not our property; and obedience, in its own nature, is due from the subject himself, and can never be rendered by another. In refusing to render it, we are criminal; and for this criminality merit punishment. The guilt thus incurred is inherent in the criminal himself, and cannot in the nature of things be transferred to another. All that, in this case, can be done by a substitute, of whatever character, is to render it *not improper* for the Lawgiver to pardon the transgressor. No substitute can, by any possible effort, make him cease to be guilty, or to deserve punishment." [And therefore justification or salvation is of free grace, even with the atonement; in which, the point argued by Dr. D. in these extracts, he is right. But, however punishment may be deserved, it clearly is not due to justice, after justice is 'satisfied.' The words in *italics* show that the better theory was blended with the worse, in the mind of this venerable theologian.]

in order to render such forgiveness proper, or consistent with the law and character of God, *in a single instance*. The forgiveness of *one sinner*, without these amends, would be *just as much* a contradiction to the declarations of the law, as the forgiveness of *a million*. If then the amends, actually made, were such that God could consistently forgive *one sinner*, he might, with *equal* consistency and propriety, forgive *any number*, unless prevented by some other reason. The atonement, in other words, which was necessary for *a world*, was equally necessary, and in just the *same* manner and *degree*, for an *individual sinner*." Most clearly, such an atonement is not to either commutative or distributive justice: the debt of one sinner, equal in amount to the debt of a world! the penalty of one, as great an accumulation of punishment as the penalties of a million! But the vindication of holiness required for the pardon of one sinner, may well be deemed a sufficient vindication for making pardon accessible to all. I have no right to say that Dr. Dwight meant this; as I do not find that he used the word holiness in this connexion, nor even the phrase "general justice," already quoted from him. But I think the views he has given belong to that theory, not to the other. Hence the two final paragraphs of the sermon, perfectly explicit on the subject of conditions, accord entirely with its general tone. "Should it be asked, why then are not all men pardoned? I answer; because all mankind do not evangelically believe in this atonement, and its Author. No man is pardoned merely because of the atonement made by Christ; but because of *his own acceptance*, also, of that atonement, by faith. The way is open, and equally open to *all*; although all may not be equally inclined to walk in it.—The proffers of pardon on the very *same conditions* are made, with equal sincerity and kindness, to every man. He who does not accept them, therefore, ought to remember, that nothing stands in his way, but his own impenitence and unbelief."

CONDITIONS ARE UNCONNECTED WITH HUMAN MERIT.

The object of this Appendix is, to prove that the doctrine of the Charge concerning the requirement of a consideration not valuable, as distinguished from the valuable consideration, in other words, the requirement of conditions, as discriminated from the cause of salvation, involves in no degree that of human merit. The scriptural creed is, that Christ by his passive and active merits, exclusive of all other agency whatever, has gained benefits for men,—which benefits he bestows on them if they perform certain conditions: my topic is, that the latter proposition does not contradict the former.

Let me first say however, that to call the pious fulfilment of conditions, a consideration, is clearly justified by scripture. “God is not *unrighteous*, *adinos*, to forget your work,” &c: if God would be “unrighteous” were he to forget our works, the performance of them is plainly a consideration with his rectitude, inducing him to remember them; yet not the valuable consideration, because they deserve nothing, and are rewarded only through the merits of Christ. “It is a *righteous thing* *δίκαιον* with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled, rest with us,” &c: if it were “righteous” for God to “recompense” with favour those who endured persecution faithfully, that faithful endurance was a consideration, with which, in the divine rectitude, the grant of the recompense was connected, though not the valuable consideration. Let Poole’s Annotations expound the difference: “The righteousness of God dispenseth both these recompenses, [that of the wicked, and that of the godly;] but yet the righteousness in both is not alike; *strict justice* dispenseth the one, and the punishment of the wicked riseth from the nature of their sin, and the merit of it; but it is only *equity* that dispenseth the other, and that *not so much* with respect to the nature of the saints’ duties or sufferings, as the promises and ordinance of God, and the merit of Christ for them.” So much for scriptural authority in this matter. I proceed to show, that the doctrine of conditions does not infer that of human merit.

A perfect illustration is found in certain miraculous cures. Miracles are the work of God alone; the cures were the work of God alone: yet sometimes conditions on the part of man were required. Naaman is told to wash in Jordan; while he refused, he remained a leper; when he obeyed, he became clean; here was a condition, and an essential one; but neither he nor any person ever thought of detracting from the exclusive glory of God, by ascribing the cure in any sense or degree to his performance of that condition, essential as it was. The blind man whose eyes Jesus anointed with clay, is desired to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; he did so, and received sight; here was a condition, and it was performed; yet no one sees in it the least derogation from the exclusive agency and honour of Jesus, in effecting the cure. So with the ten lepers, sent to the priests. So with those who received miraculous favours “according to their faith:” their faith was a condition, and “according” to the existing fulfilment of this condition was the benefit they received; while yet the miracle is not ascribed to their faith, but only to the divine power of Christ. To affirm, therefore,

that God's blessings are contingent on our performance of conditions, does *not* involve the supposition that that performance is the cause or any part of the price of the blessings granted, or diminishes in the least the freedom of the grant. Earthly favours as well as heavenly, miraculous as well as ordinary, were obtained for men by Christ; this is sound doctrine; still the examples quoted prove that the favours are not given into our possession till *we* do what is required of us.

Similar, though more impressive, is the instruction afforded in the case of the brazen serpent. Fiery serpents wounded the Israelites mortally; and Satan has wounded mortally our souls. God lifted up the brazen serpent as a certain cure; and Christ is lifted up for the healing of our inner man. In both cases, it is God's act of curing, not man's; God's exclusively, not man's in any sense or in any degree; the Israelites could do nothing for themselves which had healing power or a healing tendency; neither can we. In both cases the cure is free; all Israel were sinners, none deserved mercy; and such is our state likewise. Yet in both cases, conditions are required and made indispensable; the Israelites must "look" at the brazen serpent, or they die; and we must look to Christ lifted up, with a lively and fruitful faith, or we die the second death. Here then is a free gift, yet with an indispensable condition. Here is an indispensable condition, yet no merit in performing it. Here is something done by man, and done to purpose, so that without it the blessing would have been lost; yet no disparagement of the exclusive glory of God in effecting and in granting that blessing.

Further illustration may be drawn from human affairs. Thus:—A monarch gives an estate to a subject as a mere favour, yet on the condition of his doing homage and bearing true allegiance. This is a free gift; for the things required did not procure the estate, though they are essential to getting possession of it and retaining it; neither are they in any sense a payment for it. And faith and repentance, which are our homage and allegiance to Christ, and the conditions of our salvation through him, procure it not and are in no sense a payment for it, though requisite to make it actually ours. Conditional as are the grants in both cases, they yet are perfectly free. Thus, again:—A man who has made a fortune of his own, bequeathes it to some poor prodigal on the condition of his reforming. Here is a free gift; for the heir did not amass one cent of it, nor does he pay one cent for it, nor is his reformation a valuable consideration to the giver. Yet it is an indispensable consideration or condition. So is the reformation of the sinner an indispensable condition of his becoming the heir (in possession) of what Christ has gained; but after all, we say, with scripture, "Is it any pleasure [valuable consideration] to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?" "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?"

In the Charleston Gospel Messenger, I find another illustration of conditions of salvation, as distinguished from merit or its causes, taken from Walter's Lectures.

"Suppose the government of this country (England) should reward the services of an able general with large territorial grants in one of its colonies; suppose also, that being desirous of encouraging the growth of some particular production of that colony, they should make the grant *conditional*, and insert a clause, that the heirs of said general should only hold the estate by the tenure of producing in the king's courts a certificate, that two acres of ground, at least, had been that year devoted to the production required in that deed of grant. Now, surely, any descendant of that general would be thought to use very incorrect language, if he should boast that his estate was to continue in his hands for his *merit*, in annually cultivating two acres with the pre-

scribed production. He would immediately be told, that is the condition indeed on which you hold your land; but the *cause* of your riches is the valour of your ancestor. On the other hand, should he foolishly neglect to comply with the condition, he would be told, at once, that he had thrown away all claim to the estate.

"Just so, God has been pleased to make us an offer of 'glory, honour, and immortality,' for Christ's sake. Desiring also the propagation of virtue, as best harmonizing with his own pure and perfect nature, and as most productive of happiness among his creatures, he has made our endeavours after perfect virtue the *condition* on which we are allowed to take hold of his most gracious offer."

So clear is it, that the doctrine of conditional salvation has no affinity with that of human merit. All men will be recompensed "*according* to their works;" and the bad, *for* their bad works; but the good, not *for* their good works, but only for Christ's sake, who transfers to them so much of his own reward.

FURTHER REMARKS.

To carry out a theory of the Atonement to minute reasonings, as part of the doctrine, is wrong; and to this cause may probably be ascribed the interweaving of so much error with that which addresses it to the justice of God. For, had the idea of a *debt*, and that of the *penalty*, or of a penalty, discharged by the divine Substitute, been avoided, justice would have retained its broad sense; and so the theory might have escaped the dilemma of leading to either universal salvation or limited redemption. On this account, the author has endeavoured to keep his Charge clear of a similar fault; going no farther with his theory, than to presume the atonement to be addressed to some attribute of God, selecting that of holiness, and regarding the sacrifice as vindicating that attribute in conceding pardon to the sinner; and also intimating, that the vindication was both of God to himself, and of God to his intelligent creatures. The theory, perhaps, would be sufficiently complete without these two intimations; for theology is not bound to explain every matter under its cognisance; and those who wish, may subtract so much from the theory advocated. But as the obstacle to remission of sin must lie more in the divine nature, than in the creatures, it seemed but proper to include the former particularly, with the latter, in explaining the difficulties obviated by the cross.

Having thus disclaimed the connexion of needless matter with the body of the theory, the author submits a few Further Remarks, as a mere exercise in philosophical divinity; regarding them, and asking others to regard them, as not involved in the main subject.

The divine holiness, in its relation to sin, is total abhorrence of it. This abhorrence, in its relation to the commission of sin, is indignation towards the sinner, the indignation, not of passion, but of principle. Abhorrence and indignation are, in themselves, but sentiments; and if not carried into effect, by a being who has the power and the right to do so, they are but inoperative sentiments. To make them operative, suffering is awarded to the sinner. But, the sinner being capable of such a restoration as will fit him for heaven, mercy intercedes and asks forbearance. The obstacle to forbearance is, that holiness will, by that indulgence, be but an inoperative sentiment, and thus (be it reverently argued) of no sterling value; like faith without works in men, or profession without practice, or good feelings unproductive of corresponding actions; all which ought to be held valueless in the judgment of their possessor, and are so held in that of other persons if they are true minded. God's love or benevolence, for example, would have been inoperative had he not formed creatures. How then shall the holiness of God, his abhorrence of sin, and indignation towards the sinner, become operative, and be practically carried out? By the infliction of suffering, is the reply. But if this be on the sinner, mercy fails in its intervention in his behalf. It must therefore be on a different being,—and that being is Christ. Christ, as the representative of human sin, undergoes suffering, in humiliation, in bodily pain, in anguish of soul, in death. His humiliation is that of a divine person to the human nature, to the likeness of sinful flesh, to being numbered with the transgressors. His

pain of body and anguish of soul, so much of them as constituted the unknown agony and the unknown dying passion, were also sustained by him in virtue of his divine nature. And the union of divinity with humanity for these purposes, illustrates the greatness of the holy abhorrence and indignation thus carried into effect.—That virtuous indignation should *act* as such, is a natural thought. That it should act upon an innocent person, instead of the guilty, is a mystery: but its mysterious character is much qualified by the considerations,—that in the common course of providence, persons often suffer for the good of others,—that, if fit to be rewarded in heaven, they will there be amply recompensed for these sufferings, as Christ has been for his,—and that, in the case of the Redeemer, he agreed to become the representative of sin, in order that “sin might be thus condemned in his flesh.” In that condemnation of sin, the sentiments of holy abhorrence and indignation become operative; and this their fearful action, incalculably tremendous, is the vindication of God’s holiness in forgiving the sinner.

Still it does not result, that all sinners for whom this sacrifice was made, will be pardoned. The sacrifice renders sin pardonable in all men, and is the sole procuring cause of pardon in those who receive that grace. But the scheme is open to *conditions*; and these are annexed in the revelation of the scheme. On this point, enough has been said in the Charge.



